# Arguments and Reasons FOR A Regular Conformity TO THE Church of *ENGLAND* As Estabilish'd by Law.

Setting forth

I. The Excellency of the Constitution and Establishment of the Church of *England*.
II. The Necessity of Conforming thereunto in point of Duty.
III. The Great Benefits that Attend such a Conformity.
IV. The Disadvantages of Refusing to Conform.
V. The Evils that Attend Separation and Division.

To which is added a Pathetical Invitation, and serious xpostulation, to perswade Dissenters of all Denominations to be Wise and Sober, Humble and Considerate, Obedient and Conformable.

By JOHN JONES. *Gent.*

*Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake,* 1 Pet. 2. 13.

LONDON, Printed for *Samuel Keble* at the *Turks-head*, and *William Hawes* at the *Row-buck* in *Fleetstreet*, 1705.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA

# *To the Right Reverend Father in God,* Henry *Lord Bishop of* London.

*Right Reverend Father,*

THrough the good Providence of God, I was Initiated into the Catholick Church, by the holy Ordinance of Baptism, in my Infancy; and in my Youth was brought up under a tender Father, (who was a Clergyman) in the way of the Church of *England*; yet afterwards was led away into Paths of Errour and Disobedience, among them that Dissent from our holy Establishment according to Law: But the Goodness of Almighty God directed your Lordship to be the Happy Instrument in Restoring me to a due Sense of my Folly, in treading forbidden Paths; and to convince me of the necessity of a Regular Conformity to our most Excellent Constitution, in a most Admirable Discourse your Lordship made in *Shoreditch-Church* in the Year 1681. Whereby I Apprehended the Necessity and Benefit of Confirmation, which I then Received at your Lordships Hands, to my great Comfort and Establishment in our holy Religion: Insomuch that from that Day forward I laboured to shake off the Chains of Separation, and apply'd my self diligently to find out the Errours and Mistakes I had fall'n into, and the Danger of persisting therein; and in Opposition to all Difficulties that stood in my way, resolv'd to embrace the Communion of the Church of *England*, and endeavoured to shew my dissenting Brethren the Reasonableness and Equity of what I did, as well as the necessity thereof in point of Duty.

I have given an Historical Account of several sharp encounters wherein I was engaged, in my Book, entituled, the great Duty of Conformity, printed in the Year 1684, which being very scarce, I have made

made ready for the Preſs again, with ſome few Alterations and Additions, and the principal Change is in ſeparating this Collection of Arguments from that Treatiſe into a Diſcourſe apart, which is much enlarged, and ſeems to claim a Right to your Lordſhip's Patronage, and which you may behold as an Effect of your faithful Labours in the Church of God, wherein you are an Eminent Father: The Influence of whoſe Paternal Care, Bounty and Goodneſs is ſenſibly felt, even in the Iſles beyond the Tropick, and is liberally extended over a great part of the vaſt Continent of *America*, where it pleaſed the Almighty to ſend me for ſome Peculiar Services, to anſwer the End of his moſt gracious Providence: And for particular marks of Favour your Lordſhip has been Pleas'd to extend to me at ſundry times, I hold my ſelf in Point of Gratitude oblig'd to make this Acknowledgment. Beſeeching Almighty God to Reward all your good Services here, with his gracious acceptance and everlaſting Felicity, and lengthen your Days for a Publick Bleſſing to the Church of God.

Let my free-will Offering, which proceeds from ſincere Affection, (altho' never ſo mean in it ſelf) find a favourable Reception from your Lordſhip, whom I always Honour as a Father, and will ever approve my ſelf to be,

*Your Lordſhips*

*moſt Humble,*

*Dutiful, and Obedient*

*Son and Servant,*

J. JONES

# TO THE
# READER.

Chriſtian Reader,

*LET Charity guide thy Judgment in the peruſal of this ſmall Treatiſe, the Tendency whereof is to repreſent, not only the Duty of a willing and ſpeedy Conformity to our moſt holy Conſtitution of Chriſtianity Eſtabliſh'd by Law in theſe Kingdoms, and the Dominions thereunto belonging from Authorities of holy Scriptures; but to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs and Equity thereof, were there no Divine Injunctions to oblige us thereunto. Deſpiſe it not, becauſe it is courſe and plain, and adapted to the genius of my weak Brethren among the Diſſenters, whoſe Good and Happineſs I long for, and ſtudy with my utmoſt Power to ſerve by all Methods I can Invent, to perſwade and invite them in the Bowels of Love and Tenderneſs, to Unity, Peace, and Obedience. The Love of Peace and Unity, with their Eternal Happineſs and Comfort; and the Expectation of ſeeing a glorious State of Chriſt's Church here upon Earth, which will follow upon their Converſion to Obedience and Eſtabliſh'd Order; are the great Motives that have induced me to this Undertaking: And may it pleaſe God to Work mightily upon them by his holy Spirit, to incline them to their Duty, that they may ſee the wonderful Salvation of our God, and rejoyce with his Inheritance.*

*They are ſenſible that Union will make us all Happy; O that the Lord would incline their Hearts and Minds to perſue after it, that no Carnal Reſpects nor Doubtful Scruples may hinder them from attaining it! What Joy would there be in Heaven? What Exultation and Praiſe, Thankſgiving and Love, Peace and Good-will would be upon Earth? How would Satan be confounded, and the Kingdom of Darkneſs ſhaken? What a convincing Argument would it be to* Jews *and* Gentiles, Mahometans *and* Indians, Atheiſts, Deiſts, *and all Licentious Perſons whatſoever, to ſee all the different Sects of Chriſtian Profeſſors at Unity among themſelves? Then will Religion flouriſh again; and all the Ungodly and Enemies to Chriſtianity wou'd be compell'd to give in their Teſtimony for us, and ſay that God is in us of a Truth: Then ſhall their Converſion bear date, and Religion appear Real as it is: Then ſhall the Son of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his Wings, and Reſtore the Nations that lie in Darkneſs, and in the the Shadow of Death.*

*God hath manifeſted his peculiar care, and tender Concern for the Inhabitants of this Iſland, eſpecially for the Reform'd Religion Eſtabliſh'd among us; we were early Viſited with the glad tidings of Salvation by a Crucified Saviour; and though for our Offences we were a long time delivered into* Egyptian *Bondage and Darkneſs, under the Tyranny of Idolaters and bloody Perſecutors: Yet by the Goodneſs and Power of the Almighty, our Bands were looſed, and we became the Glory of the Reformation, after haveing paſſed through a Sea of Blood; yet the Inteſtine Heats and Diſcontents of many among us (like thoſe of the* Children of Iſrael, *who withſtood* Moſes *and* Aaron) *have cauſed us to wander in the Wilderneſs of Confuſion, even to this Day, and hitherto prevented us from ſeeing the Effect of the Promiſes: It is therefore high time to awake out of Sleep, to be up and doing, that God may Viſit us again with his Salvation, and we may become the Glory of all Lands, by being the foremoſt in this happy*

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*Revolution, to which Providence invites us, under the auſpicious Reign of a moſt Pious and Virtuous Queen.*

*We all expect the Converſion and Reſtoration of the* Jews, *and that God will bring in the fulneſs of the Gentiles, according to the Promiſe. Who knows but that he may make our happy Iſland, the firſt Preſident and Example, of a Bleſſed Union and Agreement in matters of Religion unto other Nations? For we cannot rationally expect, that the Profane and Unbelievers ſhould fall in Love with Religion, till the Profeſſors of it are united together in Love and Peace among themſelves: For as long as we Condemn, Deſpiſe, and Ridicule one another, they conclude we have no Religion at all, that it is a meer Jeſt, and are thereby hardened in their Profaneſs and Unbelief.*

*Would we know what muſt be done to obtain this Union? I Anſwer, Let all religious and ſober Men and Women of all Perſwaſions, yield chearful and ready Obedience to Superiours in all lawful things; and unite in one common Order, for the Worſhip and Service of God, and we ſhall moſt certainly obtain it. We plainly ſee that Toleration of different Religions (as we have it at preſent,) doth not cure our Diviſions, nor allay our heats; it neither removes the Plague, nor ſtops the Infection: On the Contrary, that Union cannot be happy or laſting, that is procured by conſtraint, and forced upon Mankind.*

*I therefore earneſtly importune my Brethren, to abandon the Paths of Separation and Diviſion, and to be cemented with us in Obedience and Love; and if we differ in Notions and Opinions about other matters, it can do no great harm, as long as we agree to ſerve God in one way, and are Obedient; but at preſent, our Animoſities, Diviſions, and divers Religions, are a Stumbling-block to many; a Bar againſt the Reformation of Manners, and a grand hinderance to the Converſion of* Jews, Turks *and* Infidels. *O that my Brethren would conſider it well, and lay it to Heart, and be moved with Chriſtian Zeal and Courage, to the ſpeedy diſcharge of ſuch a neceſſary Duty: Whereby they would bring much Honour to God; good will among*

*Men, (even Peace on Earth, and in their own Consciences) Reputation to Religion, and Joy in Heaven; and approve themselves to be truly and sincerely the Servants of God.*

*In order hereunto, for their Encouragement and Benefit, I have given them an Example, who have laboured under the same Doubts and Scruples, as they do; till it pleased the Lord to open my Eyes, and let me see the manifold Mischiefs attending Separation, and the Benefits of a conscientious Conformity to the most pure and holy Religion of the Nation, which I Embraced with sincere Affection, from the Awful Consideration of Duty to God. The Arguments and Motives inducing me thereunto, are the Subject of this Undertaking: And to the End my Brethren may take them in due Consideration, and be convinc'd thereby, and brought unto the Obedience of the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ, who came to establish Peace in the World: May the Lord God Almighty exert his great Power, and manifest his marvellous Love to them, making them a Willing and an Obedient People to all his Commandments; giving them understanding Hearts, and Peaceable Dispositions to follow his Will, and the lawful Commands of those that he hath set over them; that they may Govern themselves with Moderation, Humility and Charity, and in all things behave themselves as Christians ought to do; using all Diligence to keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life: That our Land may Flourish in Peace and Plenty, Truth and Holiness, Religion and Piety for evermore, and be like a City that is at Unity in it self,* Amen. Amen.

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# Arguments and Reasons FOR CONFORMITY TO THE Church of *England.*

IT pleased God in creating the World to make Man the supreme of all his Creatures on this Globe of Earth and Waters, by Enduing him with a rational Soul, fit to contemplate the Works of his Creator; and by using his Reason he discovers himself to be Superior to the Beasts that Perish: For he that can't render a Reason for what he doth, acts not like a Man but like a Brute: And if we are oblig'd to render a Reason of all our Actions, much more ought we to do so in the great concern relating to our Soul's Eternal Happiness.

St. *Paul* requires that we should be *always ready to give a reason of the Hope that is in us, with Meekness and Fear*; and lest we should Err in our Judgment and vain Imaginations, God hath revealed his Will in the Scriptures, and hath given his Spirit to assist us in the understanding of them, and in order to an impartial and rational judging of our selves, we must diligently observe that Rule wherein God's Pleasure is sufficiently manifested unto us: We are not to follow the Examples of others, nor to lean upon any Man's Judgment, Piety, or Parts, that is not correspondent or agreeable thereunto.

Love and Obedience are the ſumm of Religion, and ſubſtance of the Scriptures; whatſoever is conſonant thereunto is of God, and the Spirit of Truth; but whatever is contrary, proceeds from the Spirit of Darkneſs and Error, that leads Men into Confuſion, Strife and Diſſention: Let Reaſon then, enlightened by thoſe ſacred Oracles, judge, in all matters appertaining to our Religious Behaviour, with Reſpect to our Duty to God, and to one another.

A due Conformity to all Publick Orders and Conſtitutions of Men, that no way Interfere with God's revealed Will, is moſt rational and juſt to be obſerved and maintained; and is the Foundation of my adhering to that holy Religion profeſſed in *England*; and eſtabliſhed under juſt and equitable Laws, the Juſtice of which proceeding Will moſt evidently appear, from theſe following Arguments and Reaſons, taken,

I. Firſt from the Excellency of the Conſtitution and Eſtabliſhment of the Church of *England*.

II. Secondly from the Neceſſity of Conforming thereunto in point of Duty.

III. Thirdly from the great Benefits that attend ſuch a Conformity.

IV. Fourthly from the Diſadvantages of Refuſing to Conform, and

V. Fifthly, from the Evils that attend Separation and Diviſion.

All theſe a little explained will abundantly ſet forth the Beauty and Luſtre of our Church, which is much eclipſed by the falſe Repreſentations, that her Enemies on all ſides have agreed to put upon her.

Firſt, To conform to the Proteſtant Religion, as Eſtabliſh'd by Law, is moſt Reaſonable, if we conſider the Excellency of it; which Conſiſts, firſt in

in Decency, ſecondly in Purity, thirdly in Charity, fourthly in Piety.

I. Firſt, in Decency; how admirably did the firſt Reformers contrive ſuch an Eſtabliſhment and Uniformity in Religion, that the like is not extant in the World? Whereby the whole Church, in all Places, with due Reverence, doth Glorifie God with one Heart, and one Voice: By *ſetting forth his moſt Worthy Praiſe, hearing his moſt holy Word, and by asking for thoſe things which are requiſite and neceſſary, as well for the Body as the Soul*, in a form of ſound Words, according to the Mind of the Spirit; and that with all Decency, Humility, and godly Fear, and with ſuch becoming geſtures, as expreſs the inward Frame of their Spirits by their outward Carriage and Deportment; according to what the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſaith; *Glorifie God with your Bodies, and with your Spirits which are the Lords*; and muſt be both imploy'd in his Service; and all this is done in Obedience to the Divine Commandment, which ſaith, *let all things be done decently and in order.*

This is the Method of the Church of *England*, which acts according to the Primitive Inſtitution of the Apoſtles, and followers of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: And all thoſe things which our Rulers did Ordain, and Eſtabliſh in the Fear of God, with great Zeal, and Circumſpection, for his Glory and the Service of his People; were moſt excellently Adapted for Edification, and promoting the great deſign of the Goſpel, which is *holineſs in Heart and Mind, in Life and Behaviour.* The Reaſons, thoſe good Men gave for ſo doing, are full of Weight and Conviction to humble pious Souls, that will take pains to conſider them with an unbiaſs'd Mind, and are to be found in our Common-prayer-books: But the Diſſenters have clipt off that Glory and Beauty, which us'd to Adorn Chriſts Religion in former

Days, and which made the World fall in Love with the Worſhipers of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who expres'd their inward Zeal and Love, by outward Demonſtrations.

II. Secondly, the Excellency of our Religion, as eſtabliſhed by Law, is moſt manifeſt; from the conſideration of it's Purity: It is a Spiritual Religion, directing to a holy Life and a happy Death. According to it's Precepts, we Worſhip one God in Spirit and Truth, Father, Son, and Holy-Ghoſt, a Trinity of Perſons in Unity of Eſſence. It is a holy Religion, being purg'd from all the abuſes that have been introduced by Enemies of all ſorts, with Reſpect to Doctrine and Worſhip.

Which of all her Adverſaries can prove her Guilty of Falſe Doctrine? Hath ſhe not diligently declin'd all the erroneous Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, as Merit, Tranſubſtantiation, Purgatory, the Sacrifice of the Maſs, *&c*? Hath ſhe not likewiſe declined all the Errors of the *Arrians*, *Socinians*, *Pelagians* and *Antinomians*? Yet for all this ſhe can hardly have the Name of a Church of Chriſt, among our great ſelf Admirers. Doth ſhe not teach Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and that *there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we can be ſaved*, and that *he is the light of the World, which lighteth every one that cometh into the World*? All which repreſents her truly Chriſtian, and Apoſtolical. And as to her Worſhip, hath ſhe not purg'd out all Superſtition and Idolatry? What Hoſt doth ſhe Adore? What Images or Idols doth ſhe Worſhip? What Angels or Saints doth ſhe pray to? What doth ſhe make neceſſary to Salvation that God himſelf hath not Commanded? Is not the Word truly preached, and are not the Sacraments rightly adminiſtred according to Chriſts Ordinance and Appointment in her Communion? what Church can have greater Purity than this? Are not all her

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Ceremonies Innocent, Decent, and as the Apoſtle directs, contrived for Edification, and to promote good Order and Diſcipline in the Church?

III. Thirdly, the Excellency of the eſtabliſh'd Religion in *England* will further appear, if we examine her Charity. She doth not confine Salvation to ſuch narrow Limits as ſome have; who either Damn all for *Hereticks* that are not of their Communion, or bring the Number of the Elect to ſuch a narrow Compaſs, or ſmall Remnant, as they think included within the Limits of their own Parties, or ſeparate Conventions from the Publick: Whereas the Church of *England*, after the Example of our Saviour, doth *ſet open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers*; and is not ſo raſh to judge and condemn, as moſt of her Neighbours are. See her Charity extended in her Publick Devotions, particularly that for all ſorts and conditions of Men, that for *Quinquageſima* or *Shrove-ſunday*, the laſt appointed for *Good-fryday*, her Letany, the Prayer for the whole State of Chriſt's Church Militant here upon Earth, and her other Prayers and Publick Services, wherein the true Evangelical Spirit of the Goſpel is expreſt in perfect Charity, extended to the Souls and Bodies of all Men, which is the greateſt Ornament of the Goſpel of *our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*: Unto which Devotions of the Church there is nothing wanting, but Sincere and Devout Affections from the Altar of an humble Heart, to make the Prayers of her Sons and Daughters aſcend up to the Throne of God, *like Pillars of Smoak perfumed with Myrrh and all Powders of the Merchants*, even *a Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto the Lord.*

This is to Worſhip God *in Spirit and in Truth*; for here are Words agreable to the Mind of the Spirit, full of Love, Charity and deſires of Peace; and though many vain thoughts may aſſault us in

our Duty, and the Infirmities of our Flesh may be ready to yield to Temptations from without as well as within; yet if we watch with all diligence, and rely upon the *Assistance of the Spirit, he will help our Infirmities*; and our Prayers will come up acceptably before the Almighty through the Merits of our Redeemer, and we shall enjoy Communion with the Father, through the Son, by the Assistance of the Holy-Ghost which is given unto us to *guide us into all Truth.*

And as to the other Branch of Charity which consists in Alms-deeds; none have demonstrated this with more Zeal and Credit to Religion, than our noble Ancestors, and worthy Prelates of the Church have done, with other pious Persons, whose Charity appears visibly in the many standing Monuments of their great Piety and Devotion.

IV. Fourthly, the Excellency of that Religion which we have by Law Established, consists in Piety and Holiness. Our Doctrines will allow of no reigning Sin, all known Sins must be repented of and forsaken. Restitution and due Submission must be made in all Cases where Wrong is done, or Offence given. Obedience is required, in all lawful things, to Christian Authority, in and for the Lord; and perfect Justice to all mankind. Chastity and Temperance, Contentment and self-denial, with all Duties to God, and our Neighbour are strictly enjoyn'd; and if they are not strictly put in practice by all her Members, it is not the Fault of her Constitution, nor ought it to be the cause of Separation. We have strict Laws made to Punish Immorality, and Vice, and the neglect of Gods Worship and Service, and the Breaches of his Sabbaths; and we have many Zealous to detect delinquents, and to bring them to condign Punishment.

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We have dayly Sermons and Lectures, to awaken Sinners out of their carnal Security; to perſwade them to a holy Life, and to Build them up in their Chriſtian Faith; with due care and caution for Catechizing of Youth, to inſtruct them in the Principles of Chriſtianity, and fit them for Confirmation and the holy Communion; and we have ſeveral Societies of the more ſerious ſort who ſtir up one another to Love and good Works. We have dayly Prayers and Praiſes in the Publick Aſſemblies of the Saints, according to the Cuſtom of Gods People in all Ages, and frequent Commemorations of the Death of our Lord, in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. Herein conſiſts the very Life and Spirit of Chriſtianity, by which means we maintain Communion with God, and have fellowſhip with the Saints; and there is nothing but our own neglect that can make us miſerable.

If the People of this Land, would apply themſelves diligently, to obſerve the Injunctions and Precepts of the Church, and walk conformable to the moſt Excellent Conſtitutions and Rules, ſhe is Founded and Eſtabliſhed upon, what a happy, holy and pious People ſhould we be? All theſe things render her truly amiable, and excellent indeed; and it diſcovers great Ingratitude, Pride and Stubborneſs, to maintain or encourage an Averſion againſt her; Since in many reſpects ſhe ſurpaſſes all thoſe who pretend to ſeparate for greater Purity. There is nothing I know of, which can render a Church excellent indeed, but this Church abounds with it, as much as any in the Chriſtian World; therefore I have abundance of Reaſon, and it is my indiſpenſible Duty to embrace her Communion, and decline all others, this being the moſt excellent of all.

II. The Second Argument or Reaſon to prove that Conformity is a great Duty, is taken from the neceſſity

neceſſity of it; which will appear moſt evidently, if we conſider firſt, that it is our Duty to obey ſuch as are in Authority over us; Secondly, that the tendency of the whole Goſpel, is to lay all Mankind under the Obligations of Love, Peace, Unity and Order. Thirdly, If we conſider that whatſoever is required of us in order to Conformity is Lawful. Fourthly, that it is Expedient. 5thly, without the Diſcharge of this Duty, we can have no ſure Evidence, that we are in a State of Grace. Sixthly, the neceſſity of a Regular Conformity will appear, from the Diſſenters great Argument (*i. e.*) Convictions.

I. The neceſſity of ſubmitting to the preſent Eſtabliſhment of the Church of *England*, under Chriſtian Rulers, appears plainly; in that we are peremptorily commanded to obey Magiſtrates, and all that are put in Authority over us. That this is ſo, all Men muſt grant, the Scriptures being ſo clear and full. 1 *Peter* 2, 13. 14. 17. and 5, 5. *Titus* 3, 1. *Rom.* 13 Chapter, in all which places Obedience and Subjection to thoſe in Authority, is vehemently urged, from very noble and weighty conſiderations; firſt, from Humility, becauſe *God reſiſteth the Proud*, Stubborn, and conceited; 2, It is urged for the Lords Sake, the Holy-Ghoſt by the Apoſtle doth entreat and beſeech Chriſtians with great importunity and earneſtneſs, to *ſubmit themſelves to every Ordinance of Man*; *naming the King as Supream, and all that are ſent by him.* 3, From conſideration of the End of their high and holy Calling, it being for the *Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and Praiſe of them that do well.* 4, Becauſe People are unaccountably inclin'd to neglect this Duty, therefore he ſaith, *put them in Mind* of it. 5, Becauſe *there is no Power but of God*; the Superiour Powers *are God's Ordinance*, he hath eſtabliſhed and appointed them. 6, From conſideration of the Danger; it is reſiſting God and pur-

purchasing Damnation. 7, From the effects it should have on the People, to do good and avoid Evil, *for they bear not the Sword in vain, but are God's Ministers and Revengers, to execute Wrath upon them that do Evil.* 8, He urges it as a Duty in point of Conscience, as well as for Fear of Punishment; and lastly, from consideration of the Dues we owe them for their particular Services, in their respective Callings and Stations; *Give to all their dues* (as they are appointed by Law, which determines all Mens Rights) *Pay Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom is due* (Tythes to whom Tythes are due) *Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.*

Yet, if even Christian Rulers or Governors, in Church or State, should Command any thing forbidden in the holy Scriptures, or require any thing (as a part of Gods Worship and Service) to be observed by the People as necessary to Salvation, which God hath not expresly commanded in his Word, they ought not to be obeyed: But (Blessed be God) we have no such Rulers nor Governours to impose upon our Consciences; those things that are accounted Impositions, are only such as are left by the Holy-Ghost to Humane Prudence to appoint; and they relate to Time, Place, Gesture, Habit and other Externals of Religion, which are commanded in the Scripture to be Decent, and such as tend to Edification, and are found useful and serviceable to answer the End of Government, and promote order in the Church, from all which it appears most evident, that all good Christians are under a special Obligation to hold Communion with the Church, unless they would incur the Wrath of God, and his Eternal Displeasure, by wilful Disobedience to his revealed Will.

II. That there is a necessity of Conformity to the Church of *England* as Establish'd by Law, appear

pears further, in that the Scriptures Command *Love*, *Peace* and *Union*, and forbid *Envy*, *Strife and Discord*. This seems to be the whole tenour and design of the Gospel, of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who *loved us unto Death*, and gave the distinguishing Character between his Disciples and others, by that of Love. *John* 13, 35. Read also very carefully *Rom.* 13, 8. 10. and 15, 5. 6. and 12, 3. 9. 10. 16. 18. *Col.* 3, 12. 13. 14. 15. *Eph.* 4, 1. 2. 3. 14. 31. 32. 1 *Cor.* 10, 32. and 14, 40. Besides these, all parts of the holy Scriptures are full of Precepts enjoyning these Duties, which are the Divine Graces of the holy Spirit, and give severe Cautions against the contrary Vices, calling them Works of the Flesh; such are envying, evil-speaking, strife about Words, and things in their own nature indifferent, censuring, rash-judging, reviling, or insinuating any thing contrary to Truth, Justice or Charity; and the Holy-Ghost tells us that notwithstanding such pretend *to have all Knowledg, to understand all Mysteries, to have all Faith, to speak with the Tongues of Men or of Angels, it profits nothing without Charity, for Charity suffereth long and is kind, beareth all things, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and covereth a multitude of Faults.*

It is most plain that all that Dissent from our holy Communion, observe not these Precepts nor Prohibitions; I must confess some of our Church as well as others are not without their Blemishes, tho' I think the fewest of any, the Moon is not without her Spots; but my Soul is filled with Grief to see my Brethren, not only expose their Mothers Nakedness, (as *Ham* did his Fathers) but load her with Slanders, Calumnies and Reproaches unjustly, as though she were no Spouse of Christ; yet I will not cease to Pray for them, that God would turn their Hearts, and give them this Excellent Grace of Charity,

Charity, the greateſt Ornament of a Chriſtian, and incline them to return into her Boſom, who will be always joyful to receive them, as the Father did the Prodigal Son, who return'd by true Repentance.

Now, ſince to Remain ſeparate, from the true Church, is to abandon all Charity, and diſobey all the Precepts of the Goſpel, Enjoyning Love, Peace, Unity, Self-denial, Obedience and Order; it appears to be a great Duty to Conform; to live peaceably with our fellow Chriſtians, and as much as is poſſible to give them no Offence; to judge Charitably of their Actions and Demeanours in their worſhiping and ſerving God, not to cenſure, much leſs to ſpeak Evil of them; but in all things to comply with them, ſave only where the Scriptures declare it ſinful: For it is as much Superſtition, to Teach and Perſwade People, that thoſe things are ſinful or hurtful to Mens Salvation, which are not forbidden in the Scriptures; as it is to make thoſe things neceſſary to Salvation, which are no where commanded: From whence 'tis evident, that every Meek and Humble Chriſtian, ought readily to render Obedience to thoſe Precepts, and to be Conformable.

III. The neceſſity of Conforming to the Church of *England*, as Eſtabliſh'd by Law, will plainly appear; if we conſider that whatever is required of us in order thereunto is lawful; there is no ſin in it. The Adverſaries of our Church have managed this Argument againſt us, with all the Craft imaginable; yet nothing is more evident, than that their Allegations are vain, compared with thoſe ſolid Reaſons given by the noble Worthies of the Church of *England*, who have been engaged in that Controverſy.

The firſt Reformers, who were the Contrivers of our Eſtabliſhment, *upon the Foundation of the Pro-*

*phets*

*phets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-stone*; purg'd out whatever was Idolatrous, or Superstitious, keeping the Golden mean between all Extreams, and as near as possible to the Primitive Pattern; did in Defence of it lay down their Lives, and are acknowledged by all sorts of Dissenters, to have suffered Martyrdom, in the cause of Christ, in Queen *Mary's* Reign: They were Men of Exemplary Piety and Holiness, undaunted Patience, Courage and Resolution amidst all their Sufferings; Which Establishment of theirs, hath been espous'd and esteem'd of all godly Kings and Queens of this Realm ever since; not only as Lawful and Good in it self, but as the most adequate and proper means to promote the Power of Godliness, to support the Communion of Saints, and Establish Peace and Order in the Church of God.

Our Constitution is admired Abroad by the Wise and Godly; many of them have commended our Church Government as the best of the whole Reformation, and is most agreable in every thing to the Word of God, having nothing in it contrary thereunto: Wherefore it follows, that to hold Communion with our Church is Lawful; and her Adversaries discover themselves to be of a strange and troublesome temper in opposing a Truth so visibly demonstrated.

IV. The necessity of this Duty appears, from the expediency of so doing: For by this means we shall be most admirably united together in one holy Communion, and justly accounted the most Beautiful and Excellent part of the Christian Religion upon the Face of the Earth; we shall draw the Admiration and Esteem of all Mankind, and be *as terrible as an Army with Banners*: But while we do (by our unchristian Divisions) Fight against each other; we not only weaken Christianity it self, but are the derision and scorn of Papists, and the

open

open Enemies of our Christian Faith, and gratifie the Old Serpent who rejoyceth abundantly, at our Distractions and most lamentable Confusions, which if not cur'd by a Regular Conformity, will bring upon us inevitable Misery, Ruin and Destruction.

The Magistrates and such as are in Authority do require Conformity in all lawful things, as appears by the Canons of the Church, and the Acts of Uniformity: That Conformity is lawful, and no way repugnant to the Word of God, hath been abundantly prov'd, and is likewise confest by many that separate, and hold it as an undoubted Maxim among them, that the expediency of lawful things makes them Duty: Therefore from them we have a sufficient Argument to prove the Point, that Conformity is a great Duty: But that which they chiefly object against us, is this; that many things are required in Conforming, which are not expresly commanded in the written Word of God, and produce the example of *Nadab* and *Abihu* who were destroyed with Fire from Heaven, for doing that which God commanded them not, and that of the Children of *Israel* who *set up their Abominations in the House of God, who Built again the High Places of* Baal, *and caused their Sons and Daughters to pass through the Fire unto* Molech, *which God commanded them not.* Alas! These things God was so far from commanding, that he had forbid them to do so long before, and this was a positive Transgression of his Will; moreover, they made it a great part of their Religious Worship, and necessary to their Salvation, as they did afterwards washing of Hands, and divers other superstitious things; which became so by the stress they put upon them, and the Virtue or Holiness they made the People believe was in such Observances, distinct from the Authority of Rulers; teaching thereby for Doctrines the Com-

Commandments of Men, whereby they *made the Commands of God of no Effect by their Traditions.*

But in Conformity to our ſettled Conſtitution of Religion in *England*; what is there impos'd as neceſſary to Salvation, that God hath not commanded in his Word? There is nothing that could ever yet be proved, to convince any rational thinking and unbiaſſed Perſon, who is the only proper Judge in this caſe: For that which is neceſſary to Salvation, is not alterable by any Law of Man; yet all thoſe things required in order to Conformity, are alterable and may be chang'd as thoſe in Authority ſee cauſe, for the Peace and Safety of the Church; therefore they are indifferent, and not neceſſary in themſelves ſimply, but accidentally, as it is our Duty to obey the higher Powers, in things that are not Sinful, *whom to Reſiſt, is to Reſiſt the Ordinance of God, and they that Reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation, Rom.* 13. 1, 2, 3. And when God threatens thus, we had need look to it, as a matter of great Importance to our Salvation, and be very careful that we be not deceived, for there are many deceivers gone forth into the World, that regard not ſuch places of Scripture, and are not *afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities*; which makes me tremble to think what Account they will be able to give, to God the Righteous Judge who will one Day reckon for all theſe things.

This is a weighty caſe of Conſcience, and it is ſtrange to ſee them that have very tender Conſciences in other matters, make no Conſcience of this; although the Scriptures ſay peremptorily they *muſt needs be Subject for Conſcience ſake, Rom.* 13, 5. But why ſhould I wonder at this? Since I my ſelf have been deceived in the ſame manner, by believing the Teachers among the Diſſenters, whom I judged ſo wiſe, as to know how to prove the Church of *England* guilty of Sinful Impoſitions, and ſo good

good, as not to deceive us for a Thousand Worlds. This was my Case, and I presume is the chiefest Reason, why the common People among Dissenters are so strangely impos'd upon, who rely on the Judgment, and (seeming) Integrity, Zeal or Holiness of their Ministers, without diligently Examining the matter themselves: Not considering that frail Men is subject to be deceived, and the Scriptures must be fulfilled, which say, that wicked Men and *Seducers* grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; from all which the necessity of Conforming to the Establish'd Religion of the Nation plainly appears.

V. The necessity of this Duty doth further appear, in order to Evidence true Grace in the Heart: We have no solid Foundation to think we are in a State of Grace, except we have an universal Respect unto all God's Commands, as the Man after God's own Heart said, *Psal.* 119. 6. and our blessed Saviour saith, if ye love me, keep my Commandments, not only this, or that, but all: For a partial Obedience is a certain sign of Hypocrisie. Where Obedience is Evangelical, it is also Universal. A gracious Soul is ready to say, *speak Lord thy Servant heareth*; Declare thy Will, and lo I am ready to perform it: Behold now in this case; God will have us be subject to the Higher Powers, as being Ordain'd by him, but how many (by their Actions) do in effect say, we will not Obey? This is an ill Sign, and wo be to them at last, who shall be found partial in their Obedience. As for my part, I think it highly necessary to Obey such Precepts of the Gospel, as well as others; and except I Conform, I cannot render an Universal Obedience, nor Evidence my Love to Christ.

VI. I may add the Dissenters greatest Argument they use for Separation, to prove the necessity of Conforming, *viz.* Because I am convinc'd in my Conscience that Conformity is most agreeable to the

Word of God, therefore it is my Duty to Conform. This is the last Refuge for all Dissenters; when they have no other Reason left to produce for separating, then say they, we are convinc'd in our Consciences that it is our Duty, and we must not act against our Consciences: To all those that are convinc'd, that to Conform to the Disciplin of the Church of *England* is a Sin, it is so.

This Refuge is common to all sorts of Sectaries; and this Argument affords me as much Relief as any of them; but I thank God I have other and better Reasons to insist upon; only what hath been said may suffice to prove the necessity of Conforming to the good Old Way of the Church of *England*, in Point of Duty.

III. The third Reason or Argument, is taken from the great Benefits that attend the consciencious Performance of this Duty; and they result from the consideration of the following particulars; first, God's special Favour and Blessing, Second, Peace of Conscience, Third, Credit to Religion, Fourth, Profit, Tranquility and outward Peace and Comfort.

I. The Benefit which attends this great Duty of Conforming to the Religion Established by Law; is, that it entitles us to God's special Favour and Blessing: He that enjoyns us to render due Obedience to all his Laws, and directs us Christians, to maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and shews us the ill Consequences of Separation and Division; will not forget such as do it out of Respect to him, but will Crown their Endeavours of serving him in all Respects, with his Favour and Blessing here, and Glory hereafter: For God will be a Sun and a Shield, he will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that Walk uprightly; whereas if Men are partial in their Obedience, God will abhor all their good Services, because they have not a Respect to all his Command-

ments.

ments. God is well pleas'd to see his Servants walk in Unity and Peace, endeavouring to keep Consciences void of Offence towards God and towards Man; upon them he lifts up the Light of his Countenance, and tenders them as the Apple of his Eye; they shall be secure under the Shadow of his Wings, and shall be Preserv'd in the perilous times, and in the Days of Famine they shall have enough.

God is delighted with Obedience, more than with Sacrifice, and is better pleased with keeping his Commands, than with the Fat of Rams; the united Prayers and Praises of his Church, from Devout Hearts, in Places Dedicated to the Honour of his Name, (being according to the Mind of the Spirit) are more acceptable to him than all Sacrifices, or whole Burnt Offerings, as being the Blessed Effect of a Regular Conformity from a true sence of Duty and Conscience.

II. Another great Benefit, by a sincere Discharge of this Duty, is Peace of Conscience: They that neglect this Duty, cannot have that true Peace which God hath promised. Great Peace have all they that keep thy Commandments; while others are tormented with scruples of Conscience, with Doubts and Fears, with anxieties of Spirit and trouble of Mind, because they contend and strive against their Superiors, and the Laws that should govern them: These by a holy and unfeigned Submission, are melted into an entire Obedience, which does administer Joy, Peace and Comfort to their Minds, profound Serenity and Quietude to their Consciences, they have all Clouds of Fear utterly dispers'd; which frequently surround the others with Storms and Tempests of Trouble and Discontent; therefore this is a great Benefit which attends Conformity.

III. Credit to Religion; What is more base and sordid, than to be always quarrelling about Trifles,

and things that are in their own Nature indifferent? Or what more Honorable than a chearful and ready compliance, to what is Lawful and Juſt; and appointed to a moſt excellent End and Purpoſe? To deny the Power of Chriſtian Rulers in the external Matters of Religion, is to deny the Apoſtles Doctrine, who teacheth and exhorteth that all things in the Church ſhould be done to Edification, and directs them to be done with Decency and Order; and therefore ſaith, Obey them that have the Rule over you: Whence it becomes a great Crime, to (diſpute with or) oppoſe what our Rulers have done purſuant to thoſe Commands, and to ſuch good Ends as the holy Apoſtle St. *Paul* there Mentions. It is a great Credit and Reputation to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, to be found Obedient and Conformable in all thoſe things that are not repugnant to any Revelation of the Mind of Chriſt.

IV. Another great Benefit that attends a due Conformity to the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, is Profit, Tranquility and outward Peace; hereby pious and devout Chriſtians, are qualified for publick Services, both in Church and State; and I would to God that the Adminiſtration of all our publick Affairs in this Nation, (and the whole World) were only in ſuch Hands; then might we juſtly expect a Bleſſing from above, and that glorious Reformation that hath been ſo long wiſh'd for: But the Diſſenters plead for this Benefit, as a priviledge belonging to their Birth-right; while they Profeſs an averſion to our preſent Eſtabliſhment, and ſtudy Innovations to overthrow our Conſtitution. O that all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity would bend their Minds to Obedience and Love! And thereby qualifie themſelves for ſuch great Advantages; by which they might bring Honour to God and Religion, and be Inſtrumental to promote a Reformation in the World; beſides Advantage to themſelves and Families, not only

only by raising their own Fortunes, but by laying a Foundation to bring up a Generation to accomplish so glorious an Enterprise, with the Concurrence of a divine Hand furthering their pious and godly Designs.

'Tis true, as well as lamentable; that these outward Advantages of our Constitution, fill the Church and State, with covetous and worldly-minded Men, who only seek to advance their Fortunes that they may consume them upon their Lusts, or reserve them to Infect their Posterity with Concupiscence, Covetousness, or Pride of Life, to the dishonour of God, and scandal of Religion. I pray God Almighty to incline the Hearts of our Nobles, and Governors, to search into this mattter, and to make Choice only of such into Places of Trust and Power Ecclesiastical and Civil, as are not only of Courage and Conduct, but whose Piety and Humility are Visible Indications of their being the Servants of the living God.

Blessed be God, we have a Queen Zealous for the Honour of his Name, studious and careful to maintain Religion, upon those Wise Establishments that the first Reformers and Martyrs of God (guided by his Spirit, in Conjunction with Lawful Authority) did Institute and appoint for the Benefit and Comfort of the godly: Whose Mildness, Charity, and other princely Virtues God is pleased to Crown with Success, by making her Armies victorious against the Common Enemy, and choosing her up be the immediate Instrument of his Justice and Power in humbling an aspiring Monarch, protecting the Rights of Injur'd Princes, and securing the Reform'd Religion to our Posterity for evermore; to convince the World that Power and Strength is only from God, who can Execute the same by the Hands of a Woman, when directed to a right End. He did once before subdue the Power of an Invincible

*Armado* by the Hands of another Pious Queen of our own Nation, *Elizabeth* of Blessed Memory, who was likewise zealous to secure our Holy Religion by Excellent Laws made in her Reign.

The Lord God Almighty give our Gracious Queen Wisdom from above, and make her Instrumental to settle a lasting Peace among the Nations that are divided; that all the World may see that God Rules among the Children of Men, and hath chosen her Majesty for eminent Services in his Church, not only to defend the Reformation in general, but to give an Example to other Nations, to suppress all Profaneness and Immorality, by the due Execution of good Laws; and conferring Favours and Offices of Trust on such only who abound in Virtue and Goodness, that there may be a Holy Emulation abroad as well as at home, who shall excel in Sobriety and Godliness, which will have a great influence in reforming the World.

Christian Rulers exercising their Power and Authority, are as the Apostles saith, a terror to Evil-doers, but a praise to them that do well: And wo to those Rulers that set up Evil-doers, and despise them that do well. King *David* a Man after God's own heart, said, the Wicked shall not dwell in my House, and he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight; much less the profane Swearers, and Vain-glorious Debauchees. There are many Men of Eminency and Wisdom, Sobriety and Virtue, whose Qualifications render them useful and serviceable to the Government, and whose modesty seems to be their Crime, that lie hid behind the Curtain, invisible to the Eyes of the Publick, where they might do great good; When at the same time, Men of weak Capacities, and great Immoralities, by Intereest and Flatteries, Confidence and Importunity crowd themselves into the view of the Publick, where they are received, and become Authors of

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unspeakable Mischiefs, to the scandal of Religion and offence of Almighty God, who will require it at the Hands of those, whose duty it is to find out all prudent methods to prevent it.

If Men of Prudence and Conduct, Virtue and Piety, free from Immorality and Vice, had the sole Administration of Publick Affairs, we should never want the defence of the Almighty, nor the Blessings of Heaven; For then the Throne should be Established in Righteousness, and Glory shall dwell in our Land. And it is to be wish'd that our Dissenting Brethren, (among whom are many worthy, eminent and deserving Men) would religiously qualify themselves according to our Establish'd Constitution (as in duty they are bound) for Posts of Honour and Profit, wherein they might be useful, and do good in their Generations; which cannot be done while they maintain their separate Assemblies, which foment our Differences and lengthen our Sorrows; But I would advise them by no means to remain disaffected to the Publick, nor Enemies to their own Interest, outward Peace and Tranquility, by needless Scruples opposed to plain and evident Duty. From all which it appears that Conformity is a great Duty, since it Entitles us to the Favour of God and his Blessing; to Peace in our own Minds and Consciences, since it brings Credit and Reputation to Religion, and is attended with great Advantages of doing good in the World, and promoting our prosperity in the Enjoyment of outward Blessings. God grant we may be stirred up to the discharge of our Duty from the Consideration of the many Benefits that attend the same.

4. The fourth Reason or Argument to prove Conformity a Duty is taken from the consideration of the great disadvantages that attend an obstinate Refusal; and they are many, being diametrically opposite to the Benefits afore-mentioned, and are

brought upon themselves by inconsideration, and want of humility and hearty seeking unto the Lord.

They that Conform do well, and Rulers are only a terror to them that do evil, if thou do well thou shalt have praise of the same, but if evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the Sword in vain, but is the Minister of God a Revenger, to Execute Wrath upon them that do evil, *Rom.* 13, 3. 4. They that refuse to Conform when both God and Man Require it from them, are guilty of a great evil, by displeasing both without Benefit or Advantage. The Mad World, who care not how much they displease God, will notwithstanding be diligent to please Men from whom they expect to receive Benefit; Nevertheless these will venture upon the displeasure of both to please their own Humour and Parties. And those that are truly gracious among them, God will either bring to Repentance for this sin, or else follow them with Calamities and Afflictions all the days of their lives, either outward in their Bodies and Estates; or inward in their Souls by spiritual Desertions, and with-holding from them the light of his Countenance, for there is no true *Peace* to them that do evil. As for wicked Men and Seducers, tho' they may prosper in the World, and meet with little trouble, yet it will be bitterness in the latter end, their punishment being reserved to another World; it being expresly said, they that resist (that is wilfully and against the light and convictions of their Consciences) shall receive to themselves Damnation. The disadvantages of refusing to yield a Regular Conformity to the Church Establish'd by Law, will further appear in considering the next Reason or Argument, taken.

5. Fifthly, from the great mischiefs that attend Separation and Division, and these mischiefs are many; but I shall only instance in these six. 1. Pride,

2. Con-

2. Contention, 3. Envy, 4. Giving Offence, 5. Schism, 6. Atheism and Deism.

1. Pride, All Separation and Division from an Establish'd Church, that is found in her Fundamentals, and free from Idolatry and Superstition, proceeds from Pride. To prove this needs no great Illustration, since it is most obvious to all humble Christian Men and Women in the World; that we have here in *England*, a Holy and Pure Constitution of Religion both in Doctrine and Discipline, in the devout Methods and diligent prosecution of whose Injunctions and Precepts, Instructions and Doctrines, no Man can fail of knowing his Duty, or performing it so, as to be acceptable to God, through the merits of Jesus Christ; which will administer to him an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Doth it not therefore argue great Pride and exalted Arrogance, to reject this Christian Establishment, which will infallibly lead us to Heaven, except it be our own fault? Certainly 'tis Pride that exalts Men beyond the bounds of Moderation and Duty; that makes 'em swell with high conceits and giddy notions, despising all things (Civil and Sacred) that are not of their own Contrivance; 'tis Pride that Foments their Passions, and works 'em to a temper of uneasiness and discontent; 'tis conceit of their own Wisdom or Holiness above that of their Brethren that puffs them up to contemn and revile such as are better than themselves, that makes them uneasy to submit to higher Powers and wholsom Laws, or the Lawful Commands of Superiours, and puts them upon devices to overthrow and demolish the best of Constitutions, and traduce the best of Men, to set up in opposition their own Chimera's, Fancies and Inventions, be the consequences what they will. In fine Pride can submit to nothing wherein Obedience, Love or Humility is concern'd,

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and is a great Mischief attending Separation from our publick Constitution of Religion in *England*.

2. *Contention*, That this is a great evil, and an effect of Separation is visible to all perceiving rational Men, and is a shame to our Christian Profession, as well as to the Reformation it self, which by an honest and conscientious discharge of this Duty of Conformity would be extinct, and then we should be all united in Love and Peace, bring much Honour and Glory to God, Credit to the Reformation, and incline the *God of Peace* to multiply his Blessings upon us. This *Contention* is the Daughter of Pride, and Mother of *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Malice* and *Revenge*. Hence we have a most deform'd figure of Christianity, and the true Character of Hypocrisie display'd, which is the just Judgment of God upon us for dividing and separating from a true Reform'd Church of Jesus Christ Establish'd under Christian Rulers.

Is it not a shame to see, conceited ignorant Men, sowing the Seeds of discord amongst honest well meaning People, who are inclin'd to be Religious, but easily impos'd upon and deluded, by the *Craft*, *Impudence*, and *seeming Sanctity* of *Impostors*? I once happened to be at a store in *Maryland*, in a Room adjoyning there, were many People waiting (drinking Punch) among them was an *Anabaptist Preacher*; I had occasion to Write a Letter, and seemed not to mind the Preachers Discourse, who was all the while insinuating to the Company, that the Church of *England* was a very corrupt Church, abominable through her many *Superstitions*, and *unsound Doctrines* and *Wickednesses* which they practiced and tolerated in their Church. After I had done, I call'd him to account for what he had said, and ask'd him how he durst declare such *Lyes* and *Falshoods* before so many People, who might be inclin'd to believe him, or be seduced by him. He justi-

justified it to be all true, and would undertake to prove it. You charg'd the Church (said I) to be abominably *Superstitious*, pray let the Company know what Superstition is, and then prove the Church of *England* guilty of it; he trifled, and would evade the matter, and fall upon other Arguments. I then instructed the People in the nature of Superstition, which he could not deny, but did not understand before, prov'd that the Church of *England* was not guilty of it, but that the Dissenters and Papists were both guilty, and this *Preacher* was an Incendiary to kindle the Flames of Dissention in the Church, to the Destruction of *Peace* and *Unity* in Religion, contrary to our Blessed Lord, and his Apostles, and all true *Preachers* of the Gospel; and stopp'd him in his career of Impudence to the satisfaction of the whole Company. I knew another ignorant rambling Preacher, who could neither Write *English*, nor *Sense*, but had confidence to a Miracle; he seem'd a Saint, and wherever he came was admired and followed; but meeting with opposition from the *New-England Ministers*, became Distracted at *New-York*, recovered again, and after several other Rambles, betook himself to a Privateer, where I have heard him Curse and Swear, as well as Pray and Preach, and would Box or Wrestle with any Man aboard. These conceited Souls, having a sufficient stock of *Impudence*, putting on *Sheeps Clothing*, and having a fluent Tongue and the act of *Whining*, pass for *Gospel Angels*, and are revered and admired by the unstable Multitude, as the greatest Patrons of a more pure and undefiled Religion; But all this while are Authors *of Strife*, *Contention*, *Clamour*, and innumerable Mischiefs to the Church of God, upbraiding and reviling the Rulers of his People, and inveigling the Innocent and Unwary to their private Opinions and Practices, against the Peace of the Publick, and all the Rules of Charity given by our Saviour.

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While these Eruptions and Convulsions (caused by the Separation) remain in *Christ's mystical Body*, we cannot hope for a healthful Constitution of the same; but these Contentions and Jars must be purg'd out by *Obedience* and *Conformity*, if ever we expect to see a healthful State of the Church here upon Earth. This Contention in Religion arises principally about Words, Persons, or Things in their own Nature indifferent; which is all contrary to the Nature of the Gospel, and forbidden: And the Apostle St. *Paul* declares all such Professors to be *Carnal*; while one saith, *I am of* Paul, *another I am of* Apollos, a Third *I am of* Cephas.

*To contend earnestly for the Faith of Jesus Christ*, in opposition to *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Idolaters*, &c. is an incumbent Duty; but to contend with one another, or with our Superiors about things indifferent relating only to external Performances, and no where forbidden in holy Scripture, is a great Sin, and highly displeasing in the sight of Almighty God: *But if any Man* or Woman or even whole Communities together *seem to be Contentious*, (in such matters which are Establish'd according to St. *Paul*'s Rule for Order and Decency) *we have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God.*

III. Another great Evil that attends Separation, is Envy, with all it's poisonous Effects. This is a natural Consequent of Separation and Division: Hence proceeds all the Slanders, Lyes, Calumnies, Reproaches, ill usage and treatment the established Church hath met with from Separatists of all sorts; as for example, first the Presbyterians, the most moderate of whom was Mr. *Richard Baxter*, a Man who submitted to lay Communion with the Church of *England*, and was found very devout in her Worship and Service, and wrot in Defence of most of her Ceremonies: Yet at other times he hath treated her very scurvily as you may see in the Preface of his

his Book concerning Church Government, where he is pleased to say thus. "The Episcopacy of the "Church of *England* is absolutely contrary to the "holy Scriptures, and the practice of the Primitive "Church; it is not compatible with the Peace of "the Church, nor the Civil State; it is the cause "of all Sects and Heresies, Schisms and Divisions "which have rent, torn, and infected *England* "above this Hundred Years; banisheth all kind of "Reformation in Religion and good Manners; "shuts the Doors against the Entrance of the [redacted] "Doctrine and Disciplin of Jesus Christ; lets "loose the Reins to all Debauchery, Intempe-"rance, Luxury and Idleness; makes Pastors Lazy "in their Ministry, *&c.*

Now, pray whence proceeds all these Calumnies, Lyes, and bitter Reproaches but from Envy? For none that separate, can have love for that Church upon which they turn their Backs, but must speak Evil of her to justify their Separation.

Hear likewise the Calumny and Detraction of the Independants: Dr. *Dumoulin* in vindicating their Cause, saith in his Tenth Chapt. thus. "They "have attempted to bring in Images, and so to pass "from thence to worship them; every where the "Altars are new set up, on purpose no doubt to "make there the Sacrifice of the Mass to Smoak —— "The Ordination of Romish Pastors is held for good, "and for that of the true Church of Jesus Christ; "and on the other Hand that of the Reform'd "Churches is void and null, and because they had "not the mark of the Beast upon their Fore-head, "where at Monsieur *Claude* is extreamly offended: "—— The Doctors of the Church of *England*, as "*Thorndike*, *Taylor*, *Bramhal*, *Patrick*, *Sherlock*, *&c.* "have sweetned the Doctrines of *Rome*, to make "them relish and go down the better with Prote-"stants. And in the 14 Chapt. of the same Book he

saith

ſaith; "A famous Divine in his Preface to the "Engliſh Tranſlation of the Novelty of Popery, "maintaining very zealouſly the ſame thing in favour "of the Diſcipline of the Church of *England*, as "Monſieur *La Roque* hath done in Favour of thoſe "in France; if I were (ſaith he) to ſpeak with "French Men I would endeavour to convince them "fully that we retain in *England* more of the Pri-"mitive and Apoſtolick Government than all the "other Churches in the World. Dr. *Lloyd* and "[illegible]*lotſon* ſay the ſame thing. But I believe that "this Conformity is much like to that which is be-"tween Jeſus Chriſt and St. *Francis*. For I do "openly maintain that of all the Eſtabliſhments of "Religion, that of the Church of *England*, is wideſt "from the Diſcipline and Practice of the Antient "Chriſtians, *&c.*

Mr. *Stephen Lobb*, in the Counter-plot for Union *page* 1. Repreſents the Dean of St. *Pauls* as the Author of a Deſign to bring in Popery, and ſaith thus, "that the Author of the Defence of the Dean, with "ſome others, did vehemently carry on the Deſign, "which was ſeemingly but begun by Dr. *Stilling-"fleet*. In the Preface he endeavours to repreſent the Biſhops as the Kings greateſt Enemies, and in the middle of the Book he Labours to repreſent the Church of *England* Schiſmatical, and the Gover-nours thereof Schiſmaticks; with abundance of other Stuff too tedious to rehearſe.

Moreover, they whoſe leiſure will permit them to look into the Writings of the *Anabaptiſts* and *Qua-kers*; will find their Books full of Invectives, Falſ-hoods, Slanders and vain Boaſtings; even denying our *Miniſtry*, *Ordinances* and *whole Religion* to be of God: And declaring themſelves to be the *holy Seed*, and the *peculiar Portion* and *Inheritance* of Almighty God, whom he hath Choſen to declare the Truth while

while we remain in *Egyptian Darkneſs*, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, having only a form of Godlineſs, but denying the Power thereof. Thus vain glorious Perſons, void of *Charity* and *ſound Judgment*; conceit themſelves to be always in the right, and thoſe that differ from them to be always in the wrong; againſt whom they ſhoot their *Arrows*, even *bitter Words*; thundering out *Anathema's* againſt them, and againſt their whole Religion and Worſhip, which they ſhun and avoid, as they would the *Peſtilence* or any other deadly *Contagion*. All which things proceed from the Fleſh, and from an *unſanctified Spirit*; void of the *true Light*, which leadeth to *Love*, *Unity* and *Obedience*; whereas the other leadeth to *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Malice* and all *Uncharitableneſs*, from which, we in our dayly Prayers, humbly beſeech God to deliver us.

I have been often grieved to hear the Prayers of ſome Diſſenters, in their Publick Aſſemblies, being as full of *Vanity* and *Folly* as void of *Charity*; to prevent which ſore Evil, our Church hath appointed *a form of ſound Words*, that *with one Mouth and one Voice, we may glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*. I ſhall conclude this Head with relating a certain Paſſage I met with at a Meeting in *Horſly-down Southwark*, 28 *Octob.* 1704. The Preacher there, (beſides his new *Syſtem* of *Divinity*, which was altogether ſtrange about Chriſt's Appearance 1000 *Years* in the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, and the *New City*, *at the time of the Reſtitution of all things*) ſaid, that the *Papiſts* and *Plungers* gave away ſome of the Commandments, and if he did but go from *Weſtminſter* to *Wapping*, and ask'd all the Miniſters he met with by the way, which of the Ten Commandments they could diſpence with; he ſaid, they were ſuch complying or complaiſant Gentlemen, that one would be willing to part with one, another would part with a ſecond, and ſo ſucceſ-

ceſſively, until they had given away all the *Commandments of God.* He ſaid moreover in the ſame Sermon, that the Papiſts holding the Errors of their Church, and the Plungers denying the Holy Seed, dying as ſuch without Repentance, *could not be ſaved.* He alſo told his Congregation, that he heard a Miniſter of the Church of *England* in his Sermon laſt Thankſgiving Day ſo uncharitable, as to exclude all from the Holy *Catholick Church*, that were not of their *Communion*: Which lyes no doubt the poor deluded innocent People believed very *devoutly*, who by theſe and ſuch like means, are incited to deſpiſe and envy the Church; whereby all *Unity* and *Love* is obſtructed, *Obedience* and *Peace* are abdicated, and an *Article* of our Creed loſt; which is the Communion of Saints.

Theſe ſhort hints are ſufficient, to ſhow what Attempts are made againſt Unity by envious and malicious Spirits, who uſe all endeavours againſt this *great Duty of Conformity*, and that is no ſmall Miſchief that attends Separation from a true Church of Chriſt Eſtabliſh'd under Chriſtian Governours.

4. Another evil of Separation is, *giving Offence*: Our Saviour ſaith, *Wo unto the World becauſe of Offences, it muſt needs be that Offences come, but wo to him by whom the Offence cometh.* This miſchief of Separation is an Offence not only to Chriſtian Princes and Rulers, thoſe great Men in Authority, who with great Zeal and Sincerity, Wiſdom and Tenderneſs have Eſtabliſhed theſe Orders and Rules for our outward Behaviour in God's Holy Worſhip and Service; But alſo to the Godly, and all ſuch as love Obedience and Peace.

The whole Nation from time to time, by the Wiſeſt and moſt Religious Men they could chooſe in all the Kingdom for their Repreſentatives in Parliament have approved them, as moſt agreeable and fit for the Practice of all humble and pious Chriſtians throughout

throughout the Land; It is a Law of our making to which Obedience and Conformity is required: These are they whom we are commanded to obey in all lawful things, *for the Lord's sake*; *and for Conscience sake*; and by a Divine Authority deriv'd from God, are impowr'd to make Laws (even about Religion) that tend to Decency and Order; 1. *Cor.* 14. *ult.* But Separation and Disobedience making Parties and Confederacies, distinct Meetings and Assemblies in opposition to the Publick; give just Cause of Offence, whereunto the wo is denounced: It is also a hainous Reflection, upon the *Wisdom*, *Sincerity*, *Piety* and *Honesty* of the first Reformers and Martyrs, as well as upon the Protestant *Kings*, and *Queens*, and *Parliaments*, that have been ever since the Reign of K. *Henry* the VIII. unto this present time, who, (in their godly Zeal) have defended, approved and continued this our Holy Constitution unto us, to this day. But *it must needs be that Offences come*; not that God wills them or approves them; but they proceed from the malice of the *Devil*, who (as our Saviour saith) *Sowed the Tares among the Wheat*, that is the Seeds of Discord and Contention in the Church of God, but *wo to them by whom this Evil comes.*

5. Separation from a true Church of Jesus Christ Establish'd in a Nation, leads into the dangerous gulf of Schism. There are no just Grounds for Separation from such a Church, but in the Case of *Idolatry* or *gross Superstition*: And in both these Respects Separation from Popery becomes *Just*, and can in no wise be charg'd with *Schism*. *Schism* in the sence I now take it, is no more than a causeless Separation, such as all Dissenters are guilty of, (by forsaking the Communion of the Church of *England*, whom they cannot justly charge with those Crimes) and 'tis a Branch of the *Grand Schism* whereby Men are cut off from the *Body of Christ*.

This sin of *Schism* is defined by Mr. *Charles Povey*, in

his Book of Holy Thoughts on a God made Man, in these words, page 429. "Schism may be taken for, "and is comprehended, in any one, or in all of these "following particulars: A Desertion or Departing "from the Church of God; living an unholy and "scandalous life; slighting the Precepts and Rules "of the Gospel; running into Errors and idolatrous "Opinions; denying the Divinity of Christ, and "the Articles of the Christian Faith; Want of Love "and Charity to Brethren, and making Breaches and "Dissentions among the People of God about things "indifferent, and no way necessary to Salvation.

*Schism* being comprehended in any one of them particulars as that Author saith, who allows the Church of *England* to be a true Branch of the *Universal Church*; and saith in the first and last Articles, that a Desertion or Departing from the Church of God, and want of Love and Charity to Brethren, making Breaches and Dissentions among the People of God about things indifferent and no way relating to Salvation, is *Schism*, that is, it leads to the Grand Schism: For when by Separation Men cut themselves off from a Particular Church of Jesus Christ, Establish'd in a Nation by Christian Laws, and fall into sundry Factions, in contempt of Christian Authority, and after many Admonitions, and *Charitable Entreaties*, *due Correction* and *Merciful Indulgence* persist in the same, and obstinately encourage *Faction* and *Disobedience*: It is to be feared they run the direct way to cut themselves off from the *Catholick Church*. I do not say that by such a Separation Men absolutely cut themselves off from the *Body of Christ*, while they do Profess Faith in him; but I say that they *Dishonour Christ*, they *Rend his Seamless Coat asunder*, they open a Door to all manner of *Division* and *Confusion*, to *Error*, *Schism* and *Heresy*, which by a faithful discharge of this Duty of *Conformity* would be prevented.

It

It is a moſt lamentable thing to ſee how far the Devil hath prevailed among reformed Chriſtians, to rend and worry one another with fruitleſs Quarrels about indifferent Things, againſt Reaſon and Scripture; to gratify the Enemies of the Reformation, harden *Turks*, *Jews* and *Infidels*, who cannot believe we have any true Religion among us, as long as our *wicked Lives* and theſe *vile Contentions*, do loudly teſtifie the contrary. O that God would ſtir up the Spirits and Hearts of all that would be thought Chriſtians, to the Practice of *Humility* and *Meekneſs*, *Obedience* and *Love*: And to ſuch a degree of *Conformity* as may ſet them above all the Imputations of Schiſm, Scandal, or whatever may give Offence.

The ſaid Mr. *Povey* in *p.* 445 of the ſaid Book, ſpeaking to the Diſſenters with great Affection and Zeal ſaith: "That they ought (as Chriſtians, "and for Peace ſake) to ſit down and examine the "ſecret Receſſes of their Souls, and ſee if they can "by any means remove thoſe Doubts and Scruples "that lie on their Conſciences, and come over to "our Church; for could they do that, what a fatal "ſtroke would it be to the Tyrant of *France*, and a "ſingular Service to the Church? For then we "ſhould be all of one Mind, one Heart and one "Soul, and Fight as one Man againſt the *Fleſh*, the "*World* and the *Devil*; as alſo conquer our publick "and private Enemies whether at Home or Abroad: "O Bleſſed Day indeed would that be accounted "by all that Love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and "deſire to worſhip him in Sincerity and Purity of "Spirit.

And in *p.* 146. and 147. he further ſaith; "O how "acceptable a Sacrifice to the Almighty would this "prove, and how ſweet ſmelling a ſavour in his "Noſtrils? How comfortable alſo and well plea-"ſing would it be to all true-hearted and well de-

" ſigning Chriſtians? For then might we be ſo
" tranſcendently bleſs'd as to cry out one and all,
" *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbath, Heaven and*
" *Earth are now full of thy Majeſty, and thy Glory.*
" Nay ſhall I go a little further, we might then ſay
" with one united Voice, *Halelujah, Halelujah, Hale-*
" *lujah*, praiſed be God; *Halelujah, Halelujah*, we
" are joyn'd in the Bands of Love, to adore a Deity
" in one ſet form of Words without variation, ſo as
" never to wrangle any more with one another on
" this Account, *Halelujah, Halelujah*, we now Imi-
" tate the Saints above, in an uniform familiar, and
" pure converſe of Worſhip, Honour and Praiſe.

Theſe are the tranſports of a Man who hath great Charity for Diſſenters, and Wiſhes them well, as I do, and to theſe excellent Ends would have them hold Communion with us always, and be no longer Guilty of what tends to *Schiſm*, and cauſleſs Separation. But to omit a great deal of what might be ſaid upon this Head, I will in the laſt Place ſhew how Separation from the publick Eſtabliſhment in Church and State, is an Inlet to the horrid Sins of *Atheiſm* and *Deiſm*.

VI. That Separation is an Inlet to *Atheiſm* and *Deiſm* (then which greater Evils cannot be) I will make appear, as ſoon as I have convinc'd my Reader that we have Multitudes of ſuch Vipers ſwarming among us, ſome practical, others Speculative. Pray from whence proceed the abominable practices of the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, the *Lewd* and *Profane*, but from theſe Fountains? We ſee the World is full of Violence and Oppreſſion, under the Mask of Religion, as well as Fraud and Deceit; and becauſe Religion is the Faſhion, theſe will pretend to it, under one form or other. We cannot walk the Streets but we ſhall hear Men Blaſpheme the holy Name of God, deny the Lord that bought them, Belch out Blaſphemous Oaths and Execrable Curſes

in

in the Face of Heaven. How many deny all reveal'd Religion, calling it Prieſt-Craft, and a politick contrivance of Men to keep in awe the giddy Multitude? Blaſpheme the ſacred Oracles the holy Scriptures of Truth, as though they were of no more Authority than old Mens Dreams or vain Romances? Such Notions and Fancies do fill the Heads of the Learned and wiſe Men of the World, who would have it ſo, becauſe their Vices are there detected; and they are encouraged to believe it, becauſe they that plead moſt for revealed Religion, differ moſt about it: The different Sects and Opinions of Men in religious Matters, all wreſting the Scriptures to maintain their miſchievous Tenets and Practices, to the Deſtruction of *Obedience* and *Charity*, which are the very Eſſentials of Religion: For take away thoſe Two Pillars, and Religion will be nothing but Confuſion, Noiſe and Nonſence, which gives the fooliſh *Atheiſt*, the licentious *Deiſt*, and the ſenſleſs *Debauchees* Occaſion to think it is all a Jeſt; and to believe no other, unleſs they could ſee more Agreement and Love, Unity and Peace, among the different Parties that make a great buſtle about Religion; for while they ſee them quarrel and contend with their Superiors about Trifles, contrary to the Fundamental Laws of Chriſt, and the Law of Nature, and that upon the pretence of Conſcience and Religion; they (being influenc'd by their Luſts) conclude that it is nothing at all but a Chymera, and an Invention of cunning Men to amuſe the World, and keep it in Subjection; or a Bugbear to affright Mankind into a ſlaviſh Servitude to the Wills of others; and theſe Men accounting themſelves a degree above the common ſort, not to be impos'd upon by the ſlight of Men, let looſe the Reins to all Debauchery and Licentiouſneſs, and encourage ſuch who are inclin'd to Vice, to run with them into the ſame exceſs of Riot.

On the Contrary were all Christian Professors (who unanimously Build upon the *Rock of Ages*, even that *sure and firm Rock the Lord Jesus Christ, the Foundation upon which all the building must be laid*,) careful and diligent to bring the materials of Sincerity and Humility, Self-denial and Purity, Faith and Charity, Peace and Obedience Fear and Meekness, with the rest of the Divine Graces, and good Works issuing from the Spirit of Truth, to raise the Superstructure, and be the only materials of this glorious Building of *God's holy Church*; It would be like *Gold*, *Silver*, and *Precious Stones*, *which will Endure the Fire* of Temptation and Persecution without loss or detriment, and convince all *Atheists* and despisers of Religion, that Christianity is real and proceedeth forth from God; and that this building of the Church, *God's holy Temple*, is a more Glorious and Excellent Structure, than ever the outward Temple of *Jerusalem* was, or all the religious Shews and Pageantry on the Face of the whole Earth; by which means all the Kingdoms of the World, would be enamoured with her Lustre and Beauty, *and the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, the Princes and the Potentates of the World* would bring their *Crowns*, and their *Riches*, and their *Power*, and their *Glory*, and all their *Excellency* unto her and be her *Votaries*; *and she shall become the Praise of the whole Earth*, according to the determinate Counsel of the Alwise and True God.

But, if instead thereof, Christians will lay upon that Foundation, *Wood*, *Hay*, *Chaff*, *Stubble*, *Thorns*, *Briars*, and such Materials that will not endure *the Fire of God's Judgment*; that is to say, Hypocrisie, Pride, Stubborness, Conceit, Envyings, Discontent, Rash-judging, Evil-speaking, Lying, Censuring, Reviling, *&c.* Which are all Works of the Flesh; these will make a most deformed Superstructure, or Building of Christianity upon so glorious

and

and excellent Foundation: And though *they themselves may be saved*, yet it shall be *so as by Fire*, with great Loss, Terrour and Judgment, whose deform'd Works shall be consumed, because they give Offence to the World, make *Atheists* and *Deists*, hinder the Conversion of the *Jews*, and Reformation of Religion: All which Evils and Mischiefs in this Kingdom are in a great measure the effects of Separation, and may be redress'd by a ready complyance and chearful Obedience to the lawful Commands of Christian Rulers, under whom (by the Assistance of God's Grace) we may live *Devout*, *Holy* and *Peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*, to the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, and our own Eternal Happiness.

Alas! How can Men or Women pretend Love to Christ, while they will neither yield *Obedience* to him, nor *Love one another*? Can Mankind who are guilty of Pride, Presumption, Self-will, Stubbornes; Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering, Strife, Envy or Malice, *&c.* Be lovers of Christ, or true Believers? No, no; if they are, it is in a very mean Degree, and renders them in the Apostles Language Carnal. Christ's Religion admits of no Contentions about outward Administrations, but entire *Submission* and *Conformity*; and could we be so happy as to see it put in Practice, *Atheism* and *Deism*, as well as *Immorality* and *Vice*, must hide their Heads, and retire into Holes and Corners not to be seen among Christians, at least not so generally as now to our Grief we behold it.

Thus I have in some measure shew'd the Evils or Mischiefs that attend Separation from a Church of Christ Establish'd under Christian Rulers, where the Word of God is truly Preach'd, and the Sacraments duly Administred, without *Idolatry* or *Superstition*; which I hope, with the other Arguments and Reasons, will perswade the godly and religious among

the *Diſſenters*, to diſcharge this *great Duty of Conformity*: However I have diſcharg'd my Duty, and let the World Judge, if my departing from amongſt them has not been upon the moſt ſolid Motives, of *Reaſon*, *Juſtice*, and *Conſcience*.

*O moſt Merciful Father, thou judgeſt not as Man judgeth, therefore have I boldneſs to approach thee, who art my God and Gracious Father.*

*Thou knoweſt that I have not undertaken to produce theſe Arguments and Reaſons for any other Ends, but to let my Brethren know wherefore I have left them; and to undeceive them in what they have falſly imagined and conceived againſt me; and to ſtir them up to follow my Example, to the Glory of God, the Peace of his Church, and their own Comfort and Happineſs.*

*O Righteous Father, let it have this Effect, to create in them a holy Jealouſie, leſt they ſhould be deceived in this weighty Matter, and at the laſt Day be found to have rejected the Counſel of God againſt their own Souls.*

*Let them (O Lord) conſider well the Excellency of our holy Conſtitution, and the Neceſſity of rendring Obedience thereunto in Point of Duty, from the Reaſons that I have produced, and ſuch others as thou by thy Spirit ſhalt Communicate to them.*

*Let them Conſider well the Benefits on the one Hand, with the Diſadvantages and Miſchiefs on the other, and earneſtly ſeek unto thee to direct them in this Affair, on which depends their Comfort, Peace and Happineſs.*

*O how bleſſed a thing it is, to ſee Brethren Live together in Peace, Unity and Love! How happy ſhall this Land be if we can attain it! And how juſtly miſerable, if we uſe not our utmoſt Endeavours to accompliſh it?*

*Here is an Expedient in order to that glorious End, conformable in all things to the holy Goſpel, and the expreſs Will of our dying Lord: O that thou*

*wouldſt*

*wouldſt be graciouſly pleas'd to convince Profeſſors of it, and take from them all Humour and Prejudice, and Reſtore them to a Sober, Sedate and Prudent temper of Mind.*

*O let them weigh all things in the Ballance of the Sanctuary with an upright Heart, and give them holy Reſolutions to do thy Will, without regard to the Cenſures or Opinions of crafty Men, who lie in wait to deceive.*

*Make us all truly pious towards thee our God, obedient to our Chriſtian Governors, kind and loving to one another; and unanimouſly careful to maintain good Works, and to preſerve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, and in righteouſneſs of Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord and Saviour,* Amen.

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*An Expostulation, or Pathetical Invitation to the* Dissenters, *to be Wise and Sober, Humble and Considerate, Obedient and Conformable: With Directions for their Assistance therein, and a Prayer suitable thereunto.*

O My Friends I have a zealous concern for your Welfare and Happiness! It Grieves my very Soul to see the fresh and bleeding Wounds of our Mother the Church, widened, pierced and augmented by the unnatural Divisions, and Disobedience of her own Children! Shall we afflict, torment, grieve and abuse the Mothers of our Flesh, that bore, suckled and nourished us? Shall we despise and neglect their *good Counsels, Admonitions* and *lawful Commands*, without Imputation of being *Unnatural, Disobedient* and *Wicked*? How can we avoid the Imputation of *Stubbornes* and *Cruelty, Ill Humour* and an *unsanctified Spirit*, while we reject and despise the gracious Counsels and Offers of our spiritual Mother *the Church of God*; turn a deaf Ear to her Admonitions, Invitations and Rebukes; contemn her Authority, and resist her lawful Commands; *who is the Pillar and Ground of Truth*?

O *that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes Fountains of Tears! That I might Weep Day and Night*, for the *Breaches. Dissentions* and *Obstinate Disobedience* of my Brethren! who will not hearken to the *Voice of God*, the *Voice of Christ*, the *Voice of the Church*, nor the *Voice of Scripture*; to the practice of Love, Peace, Concord, Unity, Obedience and Order: But will dispute, cavil, contend and strive against the Truth: Will resist, oppose, revile, slander and disobey, as well their lawful Ministers as other higher Powers set over them in Church and State. What shall I say, or do, to invite and engage you to Reformation and Amendment? I have used all possible endeavours, by Arguments and Reasons, as well as Examples; to con-

convince and perſwade you to the conſcientious Diſcharge of this important Duty: And can do no more but add my moſt earneſt Entreaties, humbly and heartily beſeeching you to Repent and Return to your Duty; together with zealous and fervent Supplications to Almighty God, that he may manifeſt his *Mighty Power* amongſt you. I beſeech you not to blame me for my good will, which proceeds from the tender Love I bear you, and the Zeal I have for the Glory of God in eſtabliſhing Peace in the World by your Reformation; Which if we may be ſo happy as to enjoy, 'twill be the immediate Fore-runner of a moſt glorious State of Chriſt's Church in the World, which we are utterly unworthy of, and ſhall never obtain, till theſe *Seeds of Diſſention* be throughly rooted out, and all of us become deeply ingrafted in Love.

O be perſwaded into a temper of Moderation, which will argue great Wiſdom and Judgment, Prudence and Diſcretion; let *Charity be fervent, and Love with out Diſſimulation*: Curb Pride, Paſſion and Prejudice, the mortal Enemies of Peace; and ſuffer not your ſelves to be put upon, by any crafty Inſinuations, under what ſpecious pretence ſoever, if attended with the leaſt Sin. O my Brethren, conſider well wherein the Glory of God may be moſt advanced, the Peace of the Church preſerved, and the Union and Communion of Saints confirmed and continued: We find by woful Experience that Separation and Diviſion, doth feſter the Wound and render it more Incurable: Where then ſhall we find a healing Virtue, but in the Sovereign Balſom of *Chriſtian Obedience* and *Chearful Conformity* to the Will of the Lord and his Vicegerents whom he hath ſet over us?

Let me therefore Intreat you (O my Brethren) to *Humble your ſelves under the Mighty Hand of God*, whom

whom you have hitherto *resisted*, and speedily return unto your Duty; For when we are united together in Love, and one common Order of Worship, and have the Fear of God before our Eyes, and a due Honour for our Superiors, and discharge our selves faithfully to one another; then, and not before, may we expect to be Happy in Church and State. When the strict Professors of Godliness, that are now divided into sundry Factions, shall be united throughout the Land, in one common Band and general Consent in Religion, as setled and established under Christian Rulers: This will Convince the World of the *Truth of Religion*, be a means to have all things reformed that are amiss among us, and give evident Demonstration that *God is with us of a truth*. Alas! Here is nothing but our *Division* that makes us contemptible and despised; and nothing but *Union* will make us Honourable, and render us like unto the true Spouse of Jesus Christ. Stand no longer then (O my Brethren) to maintain the quarrel against the common Interest and Cause of Religion, now depending; but unite in *Love* and *Peace*, *Obedience* and *Conformity*, and let no vain Scruples, keep you any longer from the conscientious Discharge of your Duty. O that God would raise eminent Instruments of *Peace* and *Reconciliation*, rather than *Controversy* and *Disputation*, which we find have widened and not healed the Wounds of the Church; that we may not strive any longer who shall talk most or dispute best about Religion: But let our Emulation be who shall be most *Holy* and *Obedient* to the Laws and Interest of Religion.

O my Brethren, let Love have its perfect work, the Love of Peace and of your own Souls; let it be free and without constraint, for God Loves a free-will Offering, a most ready and willing service

vice from a due ſenſe of Duty and Conſcience: See therefore that you render it to him, not for *wrath* or *fear of puniſhment*, but of a devout and zealous mind, for the Honour of our great Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt. Labour diligently to have all things calm and quiet within, and when Doubts or Scruples ariſe in your way of Conformity, be Impartial in tracing them to their *Fountains*: If they proceed from the Spirit of God, they center in *Charity* and *Obedience*; but if from the Spirit of *Error*, they will engender *Strife*, to the diſhonour of God and diſcredit of Religion. Therefore, laying aſide all ſhadows, and outward appearances of Sanctity; lay hold on the Subſtance, which is *Love* and *Obedience* the ſolid and certain Fruits of a *juſtifying* and *ſaving Faith*, without which Faith it ſelf is *Dead*, and no more than *ſounding Braſs or a tinckling Cymbal*.

It grieves my Soul, to hear the uncharitable Cenſures of ſome, who from that wicked Root of *Pride* and *Envy*, ſtick not to deny Chriſt's pure Religion eſtabliſh'd among us, to be of *God*: And would limit his Holy Spirit, Power and working to their narrow *Humours* and fond *Conceits*; as tho' themſelves or their Party alone, were the peculiar and choſen People, that have God's Preſence and Power amongſt them: When at the ſame time, they have viſible marks of *Contention* and *Pride* abiding on them.

It is evident without contradiction, that under every Sect or Opinion of Religion, even thoſe that pretend to the greateſt Purity, the *Hypocrites* and *Deceivers*, will ſhrowd themſelves, as well as the more careleſs, lukewarm and notorious Offenders; and 'twill be no otherwiſe, as long as the World is compoſed of *Good* and *Bad*, *Righteous* and *Wicked*, *Sinners* and *Saints*, whereof are made all Congregations and Aſſemblies whatſoever that Worſhip God; who

who permits them to grow together in the Field of this World, till the day comes that he will Judge it in *Righteouſneſs*, and make a viſible Separation; and aſſign all Fleſh their juſt *Rewards*: Here, the *Ungodly* as well as the *Righteous*, the *Atheiſt* as well as *Believer*, the *Drunkard* as well as the *Sober*, the *Adulterer* as well as the *Chaſt*, the *Profane* as well as the *Holy*, the *Hypocrite* as well as *Sincere*; make an outward Profeſſion together in the viſible Church, to whom the word Preached doth promiſcuouſly belong; to the one ſort for their *Converſion* and *Amendment*, to the other for their encreaſe in *Grace*.

We are not therefore to *deſpiſe* one another, but ſhould *adviſe*, *perſwade* and *Admoniſh* thoſe that go aſtray; for he that is wicked now, may amend and be reformed; and we cannot avoid them unleſs we go out of the World, nor may we by any Authority of Holy Scripture, ſeparate from a common eſtabliſh'd Order and Diſcipline, for having in it a *mixt multitude*, nor for any other Reaſon; provided ſhe be found in the *Faith*, and free from *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*.

I beſeech you therefore to lay it to heart, and to conſider well the Reaſons both for, and againſt *Conformity*, that you may be fully ſatisfied in mind, and that what you do may be free and ſincere, from an inlightened Spirit informing your Judgment a Right: Becauſe if you perſiſt in any Sin or Error, for want of due care and diligence in the ſearch after Truth, you will ſuſtain great loſs and damage, when God comes to make Inquiſition into the ſincerity of your Actions. I earneſtly beſeech you therefore for *God's ſake*, for your own *Souls ſake*, and for the *ſake of Peace*, that you will be united tother with us *in Love*, in *Obedience* and *Conformity*, which is your bounden Duty: That ſo all, that pretend to the *Power of Godlineſs*, may unite in one common Bond of Friendſhip, for Defence of Religion,

gion, againſt all *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, and *Immoral* or *Prophane Perſons*: And for your aſſiſtance herein, be pleaſed to make uſe of theſe few Directions.

1. Be not contented to run over the Arguments and Reaſons that I have urged for a *Regular Conformity* to the Church of *England*, curſorily and ſlightly; but Read them over and over, with good Underſtanding and an obedient Mind, willing to ſubmit to the Dictates of Reaſon, and the Voice of God, ſpeaking by the *Sacred Oracles* of the Holy Scripture: I beſeech you weigh well, and ſeriouſly conſider all the Arguments that are produced for *Conformity* as well as thoſe you have againſt it; and put them into the *Ballance of the Sanctuary*, and by the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, you ſhall be competent Judges whether it be Duty or not; and if yon baniſh *Prejudice* and *Partiality* I am perſwaded you will be of my Mind, and follow my Example.

2. Keep a watch over your *tongues*. *If any Man offend not in word* (ſaith St. *James*) *the ſame is a perfect Man, and able alſo to bridle the whole body; Behold we put bits into the Horſes mouths, that they may obey us. The Tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things: Behold what a great matter a little Fire kindleth. The Tongue among our Members defileth the whole Body, and ſetteth on Fire the courſe of Nature.* *James* 4. 2. &c. When the mind is polluted with *Pride* and *Prejudice*, the Tongue becomes an Inſtrument of *Debate* and *Contention*, *Strife* and *Diviſion*; But what ſaith the ſame Apoſtle to this matter in the ſame Chap. *If ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the Truth, for where envying and ſtrife is, there is Confuſion and every evil work.*

As you would be accounted *religious* and *good Men*, in the ſence of the Scriptures, pray ſpeak evil of no Man, whatever you know he is guilty of, except

cept it be for his *Reformation*, or *warning to others*; Especially speak no Evil of *Dignities*, or of the *Rulers* of thy People: But imploy your Tongues to the *Honour of God*, the *Peace of the Church*, the *unity of Saints*, and to further *Love*, *Obedience* and *Conformity* to all lawful Commands of Superiors; And pray observe well the Words of the same Apostle in his first Chapter 26. Verse, *If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this Mans Religion is vain.* Therefore you that give such a Liberty to your Tongues beware least your Religion be vain.

3. Have *Humility* and *Charity*. These Graces wonderfully conduce to *Obedience* and *Conformity*; For it is the Nature of Humility to yield Obedience where 'tis due, to be submissive & ready to every good Word and Work: *It exalteth not it self* against others, especially *Superiors*, but is modest in all things. And *Charity* obligeth us to thinke well of every *good Person*, even better than of our *own selves*, more particularly the *Ingenuous*, the *Learned* and *Godly*, who are set over us in *Church* and *State*, they being *God's Ordinance*, appointed by him for that Service: Wherefore *Humility* and *Charity* will not permit us to resist them, but obligeth us to *Obey*; to put the best Construction we can upon all their Actions and Proceedings, and in no wise to find fault without just cause, or to wrest them to any Evil purpose, whereof *Discontent*, *Trouble* or *Prejudice* may arise; Consider well the advice of St. *Paul* 2 *Cor.* 10. 2. *Do ye look upon things after the outward appearance? If any Man trust to himself that he is Christs, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christs, even so are we Christs also.*

Notwithstanding these Rules of *Humility* and *Charity*, given us in the Holy Scriptures; there are some among you who *Judge* and *Condemn us*, as tho' we were not of *Christ's Flock*, and are not afraid

in

in their rash Judgment to call us *Antichrist*: Yet we are not afraid to bring our *Doctrine* and *Discipline* to the Line of *Truth*, and Plummet of *Righteousness*, and to the Touchstone of *Charity* and *Obedience*; having the Assurance in our selves that *we are Christs*, endeavouring to *keep the unity of the Spirit*, *in the bond of Peace*, and righteousness of Life; and cannot but perswade you to joyn with us in all *Humility* and *Charity*.

4. Be *Sober* and *Moderate*. Let no intemperate Zeal govern you in doubtful matters. It is your Duty undoubtedly, in all the great concerns of Religion, which relate to *Faith*, *Holiness*, *Righteousness*, and *Peace*; to act with zeal and fervour: But in matters of *Opinion* and *Controversy*, and *doubtful Disputation*, be moderate and easy.

It is a shame to see with what heat and violence some controverted points are managed, and the Cause carried more by *Humour*, *Faction* and *popular Fury*, than sound Reason or warrant of Scripture: When at the same time we see a profound remissness and indifferency about the weightier Matters, which are *Judgment*, *Righteousness*, *Love* and *Obedience*.

Wisdom and Prudence which should guide your moderation, and keep it in a due temper; you suffer to lie fast asleep; while you rouse up the Counterfeit, that is, *Craft* and *Cunning*, which opposes the Truth, and leads into *Error* and *Confusion*; concerning which the Apostle St. *James*, in Chap. 3. Vers. 15. to the end, saith; *This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly sensual and devilish; for where Envy and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work. But the Wisdom which is from Above, is first pure then peaceable, gentle and*

*eaſy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocriſie, and the fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace, of them that make Peace.*

Be as zealous as you can to advance the *Spirit* and *Life of Religion* in all *Godlineſs* and *Honeſty*: But as indifferent as is poſſible about doubtful Matters and outward Rules of Diſcipline, not caviling at what our Superiors enjoyn; 'tis their *Office* to appoint all ſuch things; and yours to *examine* whether they are according to the Apoſtles general Rule, and if you find them ſo, and that they are *Eſtabliſhed by Law*, the indifferency ceaſeth, and your Duty to them comes in force, which you cannot neglect, without contracting great guilt, as is moſt evident throughout the whole New Teſtament. This Rule of *Moderation* and *Indifferency* in all matters of *Controverſie*, that relate to *Ceremonies* and *outward Adminiſtrations*, being things indifferent in themſelves, till the Stamp of *Authority* be fix'd upon them, is a certain Rule conducing to *Peace*, and *Conformity*: And here I may juſtly uſe the words of St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 6. 16. *As many as walk after this rule, Peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the* Iſrael *of God.*

5. Be fervent in *Prayer*, that God by his Spirit would guide you into *all Truth*, as he hath *promiſed*: That you may not be deceived by any ſpecious pretences whatever, or be betray'd into ſin, and that the Enemy may not beguile you into *Miſchief* and *Folly*, under the covert or guilded ſhew of *greater Purity*: But be earneſt with God to open your *Underſtandings*, to rectifie your *Judgments*, and ſubdue your *wills* to the Obedience of his Will, to temper your minds unto *Charity* and *Peace*, and to ſubdue in you all Carnal Affections, whether of *Pride*, *Paſſion*, *Prejudice*,

*judice*, or *Conceit*; that he would ſhew you your *Miſtakes* and *Errors*, and direct you in the way he would have you go, to the Glory of his Name, the quiet and ſatisfaction of your own Conſciences, and your Souls Eternal Happineſs.

Let every Soul among you, whether Old or Young, Male or Female, Bond or Free, be earneſt with God for Grace, to enable you to diſcern what *his bleſſed Will is*, and whereinſoever you find Oppoſition in your way of Conformity to the Eſtabliſhed Religion, beſeech him to direct you what to do, and he will give you a *right Underſtanding in all things*. Be diligent and ſincere, in examining all objections that lie in your way, and in meekneſs of ſpirit compare one thing with another, and chooſe what is *leaſt offenſive* in his ſight: For by thus ſeeking for his guidance and ſubmitting to his will, without reſerve or guile, and without fear of ſhame or reproach, with reſpect to any *Perſon*, *Society* or *Congregation* that you belong to, doing all ſincerely in the Name and Fear of the Lord, (as I truſt I have done) you will find, that all things will concur to the eaſy performance of this *great Duty of Conformity*. For your further aſſiſtance and help herein, I have added a ſuitable *Prayer*, to be uſed when under any doubts or fears; or any time when you would reſign your ſelf to the Will of God, and Obedience of the Truth as it is in Chriſt Jeſus.

*O Lord, thou art the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect Gift. I a frail and ſinful Wretch, ſenſible of my own weakneſs and imperfections, come to implore thy mercy, favour, and direction; who am in doubt whether the way I do profeſs be conſiſtent with the Divine Precepts of our Lord and*

*his holy Apoſtles, who peremptorily require Love, Unity and Peace, with entire Subjection and Obedience to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake, and for Conſcience ſake; and forbid the contrary Vices, which are Variance, Strife, Contention, Diſobedience and all other works of the Fleſh.*

*Thou haſt by thy Providence and ſpecial Goodneſs to theſe Nations (unto whom I do belong, as a Member) reſcued them from Idolatry and groſs Superſtition, in which they were involv'd in times of Popery; and haſt brought us out of thick Darkneſs, into the marvellous light of the everlaſting Goſpel of Peace and Truth, by a glorious Reformation of the Church, which is reduced to it's Primitive Purity, and Eſtabliſh'd under a pious and godly Queen: For which all Glory be to thee my God for evermore.*

*I am a Member of the Reformation, yet in ſome circumſtantial Matters of Opinion, do differ from the Church by Law Eſtabliſh'd; if I am wrong therein, O Lord, reſtore me, I beſeech thee to the Unity of Faith and Diſcipline there required, and make me zealous and ſincere in her Communion: If I am right, confirm me in my Way and Practice, and let me never do any thing contrary to Charity, Peace and Union, but do the utmoſt that I lawfully may, to advance it in Word and Deed.*

*To that End, I humbly Pray thee for thy holy Spirit, to guide and lead me to the Truth as it is in Jeſus Chriſt, according to thy Promiſe, that by it I may be delivered from all Ignorance and Error, Partiality and Hypocriſie; and in all Sincerity apply my ſelf to perform every known Duty, to avoid every known Sin, and exerciſe my ſelf always to keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man, and ſubmit all my own uncertain Notions and Opinions to unprejudiced Reaſon, and the more plain Determinations of holy Writ.*

*Suffer*

*Suffer me not (O Lord) to be ſo far wedded to any Party or Opinion, as to withſtand the things which make for Peace; and let me with all Sincerity and Diligence, weigh and conſider the Reaſons urged for Conformity to the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, in Oppoſition to thoſe I have already conceived againſt it, and give me a ſound Judgment to determin and chooſe what is moſt acceptable in thy Sight, and agreeable to thy Will revealed in holy Scripture, which I will cleave unto by thy Help, and Grace aſſiſting me.*

*O Lord, let me not be deceived in any thing relating to my future Happineſs, or the way leading thereunto: I lie in the midſt of Snares and Temptations, and the Children of Men who are ſet on Fire; who are always contending, quarrelling and diſputing; as though Religion conſiſted more in Words and paſſionate Diſputes, than in Meekneſs and Love, Gentleneſs and Moderation.*

*Make me (O Lord) zealous for the Honour of thy Name, ſolicitous to be found a new Creature, Born of the Spirit; to be found in Chriſt Jeſus, not having my own Righteouſneſs, but that which is by Faith in his moſt precious Blood; to have lively Evidences of my Faith and Repentance by my Love and Obedience: But make me very Indifferent about outward Modes and Ceremonies for Diſcipline and Order; ſubmitting my ſelf entirely therein, to my Chriſtian Governours, whom I am commanded to Obey.*

*Bleſſed be God who hath ſent his Son to Reveal his whole Counſel unto us for our Salvation, by whom he hath declared his bleſſed will to his Church; which is built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the Chief Corner-ſtone, in whom all Believers, with their ſhining Graces, are fitly fram'd together, to make a glorious building, which is his holy Church: Unto whom he hath given ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets,*

*ſome*

*ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, and edifying the Body of Chriſt: To whom is given the Power of Rule and Authority in the Church, to appoint unto all the Members, whatever tends to Edification, Decency and Order; and unto whom we are indiſpenſibly bound to render due Honour and Obedience.*

*O my God, whereinſoever I have ſwerved from my Duty, by ſlighting thy Precepts, reſiſting the Authority of thy Servants, in contempt of thy holy and righteous Commandments; forgive me I beſeech thee, and let me have Grace to amend: And if I have contributed to the Sins of Contention, Diviſion or Separation, either by Word or Deed, Argument or Example; pardon thy Servant, and Work in me by the Power of thy Grace, ſuch a diſpoſition of Mind, that I may for the future, chearfully do my Duty to thee my God, and my Lawful Superiors in all Humility.*

*O Lord, let me not lay a ſtumbling Block to the Enemies of Religion, by defending any Party, in oppoſition to the main Body of Chriſt's holy Catholick Church: For while ſo many of us are condemning one another, we give juſt ground to the Adverſaries to condemn us all. Lord aſſiſt us to Love one another better, and to be entirely united, that this great Evil may be redreſſed.*

*Be pleaſed (O my God) to raiſe up ſuch eminent Inſtruments, as may carry on this important Affair ſo effectually, that Debate and Diſcord, Strife and Diviſion, Error and Schiſm, may give place to Love and Peace, Unity and Order, Obedience and Conformity to all Divine Precepts.*

*Make bare, thine Arm (O Lord) to cut off Antichriſt, and to exalt the Throne and Dominion of thy Son Chriſt Jeſus, above all Thrones and Empires in the Univerſe, that every Knee may bow to that Adoreable Name which brings*

*brings Salvation to the World: That all Nations, Tongues and People may Confeſs him and Worſhip before him, who is God made Man, now exalted at the Right Hand of the Throne of God, in the higheſt Heavens, making Interceſſion for us.*

*O Lord, my God, incline my Heart to do my Duty, to Love the Saints in all Places; and make me inclinable to Obedience and Conformity, upon ſuch Motives and Grounds, as may ſtand the Teſt of a well inform'd and ſound Judgment, grounded upon the ſacred Oracles of Truth: That from the bleſſed Communion of thy Saints, in the Church Militant here on Earth, I may be tranſlated to that glorious Company, which is Triumphant in Heaven; that together with them and all the heavenly Hoſts, I may ſing Anthems,* Halelujah's, *Praiſes, and Thankſgivings, unto him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever,* Amen.

*To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy-Ghoſt, one Eternal Glorious Spirit; be Bleſſing, Adoration, and Obedience now and evermore,* Amen.

FINIS.